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Moscow, Spruced Up and Wary, Braces for 'Olympic Saboteurs'

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MOSCOW, July 12 — Moscow is preparing for the Olympics as though it is unsure whether to dress up for a party or brace for an attack.

Miles of peeling buildings have been painted yellow and pink and miles of cracked roads have been repaved. Bare patches have blossomed into flower beds and stark streets have been lined with trees. Early in the morning, and again in the evening, convoys of troops rumble through the city, "storm workers" rushing to the few Olympic sites that remain to be finished before the Games open next Saturday.

Thousands of university students are behind the counters of the Olympic Village and the Olympic press centers, ready to answer questions from athletes or correspondents in English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic or Japanese. Thousands more have been mobilized to act as guides and translators for tourists.

Parks are ready to give band concerts, theaters to regale visitors with variety shows and plays, orchestras to fill the nights with classical music, pop groups to punctuate them with Soviet rock. From all over the country local troupes have been brought in for weeks of unremitting culture. "No other city hosting the Olympic Games has ever been in such a state of readiness as Moscow," exulted Tass, the official press agency.

Not all the readiness is festive; some of it is grim.

An emptiness, a hush, has fallen over the principal streets, the cumulative effect of weeks of an unavowed but obvious police campaign to thin out traffic during the Olympics by confiscating license plates for the slightest infraction. The police have also begun barring drivers with non-Moscow registration papers from entering the capital without special passes.

Pairs of policemen posted each hundred yards along streets stop drivers at every chance. Security men race about in cars, issuing loud, harsh orders through bullhorns. They also crowd the tree-lined sidewalks where people like to rest on park benches. They gather before the Rossiya and Kosmos Hotels, where 3,000 foreign journalists will be staying, giving the entrances an off-limits look and scaring off the Muscovites who usually hang about in front of tourist hotels.

Many of the policemen have been brought in from other cities, some from as far away as Central Asia. At the same time, Russians tell their foreign friends, many Moscow policemen have been put in plain clothes. If past experience is any guide, they can be expected to mingle with Olympic crowds and step forward as

"ordinary Soviet citizens" to administer a "fitting rebuff" to any unseemly "provocations" by Western visitors.

Some cities, among them Gorky, have stopped issuing train tickets to Moscow until Aug. 5 except for Moscow residents or people with a special need to go to the capital. Other cities have announced wholesale cancellations of train service to Moscow from July 13 to Aug. 8.

'Don't Wait Any Incidents'

The precautions leave visitors to Moscow with the feeling that they are in one of the most heavily policed cities in the world, a city on the brink of something unnamed but vaguely dangerous. Soviet officials, asked why such extraordinary security precautions are considered necessary, say they "do not want any incidents."

A notice in the main Moscow post office says all packages addressed to Moscow as well as to Leningrad, Tallinn, Kiev and Minsk — the other Olympic sites — must be submitted open. The statute cited deals with the illegal use of explosives.

In view of the Munich Olympics, where 11 Israeli athletes were killed by Arab gunmen in 1972, it is hard to question the need for tight security. There is also ample evidence that the preventive measures in Moscow have been taken with more than terrorism in mind.

Almost all dissidents have been cleared out — arrested or banished or persuaded to go on vacation — during the cleanup that began months ago. Schoolchildren are away in summer camps — "as usual," say the authorities, although parents report a good deal more than the usual pressure to get the youngsters out of town.

300,000 Soviet Tourists

The 300,000 Soviet tourists expected in Moscow for the Olympics will be shepherded around in closely controlled groups. But there are still the people of Moscow to worry about.

Security officials are visiting all major places of work and study to lecture on the need for vigilance against foreign subversion. They tell their audiences what nasty political questions may be flung at them by "Olympic saboteurs" and how to put the troublemakers in their place. They instruct them on what else to expect — strips of cloth that sprout slogans when unrolled and held aloft, chewing gum for children spiced with poison or venereal disease, and other dirty tricks.

It is surprising to hear the accounts of the lectures that have been passed on by some of the people who have had to attend them. "My God!" exclaimed a Western diplomat, "I think the authorities are really afraid." When Moskovskaya Pravda, the newspaper of the Moscow Province Communist Party, said in April that the Central Intelligence Agency

planned to undermine the Olympics with teams of subversive agents trained by Zbigniew Brzezinski, the White House national security adviser, the story seemed too fanciful to be believed by the very authorities who planted it.

An hour-long television documentary preached the same message to millions of Soviet viewers last Sunday. Entitled "Lies and Hatred," the program showed how the clever minions of the C.I.A. conceal anti-Soviet books and pamphlets, including instructions for manufacturing explosives, in secret compartments of cars and specially tailored clothing. All this, said the commentator to ominous background music, is part of a plot to employ Zionist and fascist groups, including Russian émigré organizations, to conduct espionage and wage psychological warfare in Moscow during the Games.

Air of Border Checkpoint

The newly completed main Olympic press center in downtown Moscow — its six stories framing a plaza with a fountain — was designed as a pleasant, modern expanse. But the wire fence, the iron gates, the police huts and booths give its gray concrete the air of a border checkpoint. Western journalists checked through the electronic metal detectors and X-ray machines — the first time such security procedures have been imposed at an Olympic press center — must submit books and other written matter for inspection. The same checks are in force at the airport and in the hotels housing journalists.

At the Olympic Village on the city's outskirts, the security is even tighter. Tall wire mesh stretches along a new highway. A young soldier patrolling the fence, a Kalashnikov rifle slung across his back, orders a pair of hapless pedestrians to the other side of the road.

There is one gate for journalists with special Olympic accreditation cards. In the newly built Cultural Center the cards are exchanged for special passes and the journalists are allowed, one by one, to go through a door into a room with the security devices. A reporter with a small Japanese camera has to put that, too, through the X-ray machine. On the other side, he has to show how the camera works — pull back the lever and press the shutter button — as though the police want to make sure it does not fire bullets or poisoned darts.

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